

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 1241

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SO US

SUBJ: CODEL BINGHAM: A SUCCESSFUL VISIT

REF: MOGADISCIO 1236 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVE AND MRS. JONATHAN BINGHAM WERE GIVEN RED CARPET TREATMENT AS OFFICIAL GUESTS OF GSDR DURING THEIR VISIT TO SOMALIA, AUGUST 19-22. TWO AND ONE-HALF HOUR SESSION WITH PRESIDENT SIAD WAS ONE-SIDED. CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER GSDR OFFICIALS WERE CORDIAL AND FRANK. VISIT PROVIDED EMBASSY WITH RARE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE SUSTAINED CONTACT WITH HIGH SOMALI OFFICIALS IN RELAXED SURROUNDINGS.

2. CODEL MET ON ARRIVAL BY SECRETARY OF INDUSTRY ABDIKASIM SALAD HASSAN, CHIEF OF PROTOCOL MOHAMED OSMAN, AND FONMIN DIRECTOR OF EURO-AMERICAN AFFAIRS HASSAN KAID. SECRETARY ABDIKASIM SERVED AS OFFICIAL HOST THROUGHTOUT VISIT; AT LEAST ONE OF THESE GSDR OFFICIALS ACCOMPANIED CODEL ON ALL OFFICIAL PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.

3. SCHEDULE BEGAN AUGUST 20, WHEN AFTER SHORT MEETING WITH AMERICAN STAFF, CONGRESSMAN AND MRS. BINGHAM, HASSAN AND CHARGE, PLUS REPS FROM MININFO AND MINED, TOOK ALL-DAY TRIP

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TO INSPECT YOUTH AND AGRICULTURAL PROJECTS SOUTHWEST OF MOGA-

DISCIO IN AFGOI, GENALE, AND MERCA AREA. CODEL GREETED BY MASS ROADSIDE TURN OUT OF INHABITANTS NEAR MERCA, LED BY BRIGADIER GENERAL MOHAMED ALI MIRRE, REGIONAL CHAIRMAN (GOVERNOR) OF LOWER SHEBELLI REGION. GOVERNOR PERSONALLY EXCORDED CODEL ON INSPECTION OF AGRICULTURAL CRASH PROGRAM FARM AND SUBSEQUENTLY LAID ON LAVISH LUNCH UNDER THORN TREES, COMPLETE WITH REVOLUTIONARY SPEECHES AND LONG PROGRAM OF SINGING AND TRADITIONAL DANCING. AFTER LUNCH, GOVERNOR ACCOMPANIED CODEL TO SUMMER YOUTH CAMP AT MERCA (YOUTH CAMP FEATURED LARGE SIGN WELCOMING "OUR REVOLUTIONARYBROTHERS FROM CUBA") AND INSPECTION OF LARGE-SCALE SAND DUNE STABILIZATION PROGRAM CONDUCTED BY THE SOMALI MILITARY. CODEL RETURNED MOGADISCIO FOR DINNER HOSTED BY SECRETARY ABDIKASIM. DINNER, LIKE ALL OTHER GSDF-ARRANGED EVENTS IN THE PROGRAM, INCLUDED ONLY SOMALI AND U.S. PARTICIPANTS.

4. MORNING OF AUGUST 21 CODEL CALLED ON SECRETARY OF EDUCATION ABDIRAZAK, SECRETARY OF PLANNING MEGAG, AND SECRETARY OF INDUSTRY ABDIKASIM. MOST OF CONVERSATION DEVOTED TO QUESTION OF FUTURE U.S. ASSISTANCE, WITH SOMALIS MAKING IT CLEAR THEY STILL REGARDED CURTAILMENT OF U.S. AID AS UNFRIENDLY ACTION BY U.S. AGAINST THE REGIME. ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE MENTIONED ONLY IN PASSING DURING FIRST TWO MEETINGS, BUT CAME OUT STRONGLY IN THE LATTER PART OF MEETING WITH ABDIKASIM WHO REVEALED DEEP GSDF SUSPICION OF U.S. SUPPORT AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA. CHARGE THEN GAVE LUNCHEON WHICH FIVE SOMALI OFFICIALS ATTENDED IN EXTREMELY RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. CODEL MET AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND SELECTED FOREIGN GUESTS AT EMBASSY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COCKTAIL WHILE AWAITING MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SIAD.

5. MEETING WITH SIAD WAS NOT RPT NOT HIGH POINT OF VISIT. SIAD LOOKED TIRED AND OFTEN SEEMED TO BE SPEAKING FOR BENEFIT OF OTHER SOMALI PARTICIPANTS PRESENT (SECRETARY ABDIKASIM AND FONMIN DIRECTOR GENERAL ABDURAHMAN). SIAD GAVE LONG, HISTORICAL EXPOSITION OF CAUSES OF 1969 REVOLUTION, BACKGROUND OF SOMALI LOST TERRITORIES, SOCIALIST GOALS OF THE REGIME AND, FINALLY, FAMILIAR EXPOSITION ON CURRENT ETHIOPIAN DISPUTE. DURING SIAD'S LONG LECTURE, CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM TRIED TO RESPOND TO SPECIFIC POINTS BUT SIAD CUT HIM OFF. IN LAST FEW MINUTES OF MEETING, CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM GAVE EFFECTIVE EX-
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PLANATION OF CONGRESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FLAG SHIPPING AMENDMENTS TO FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT AND PROMISED THAT HE AND OTHERS IN CONGRESS WOULD WORK TO REMOVE THESE RESTRICTIONS REGARDING SHIPPING TO NORTH VIETNAM AND CUBA. HE STRESSED U.S. VIEW THAT OAU COMMITTEE WAS POSITIVE STEP TO REDUCE BORDER TENSION AND WORK TOWARD SOLUTION OF UNDERLYING PROBLEM.

6. CHARGE DELIVERED PRESIDENT NIXON'S REPLY TO SIAD'S LETTER

(STATE 162303). SIAD SEEMED PLEASE BUT MADE NO DIRECT COMMENT.

7. IN BRIEF DEPARTURE STATEMENT AUGUST 22 (REFTEL, CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM EXPRESSED HIS HOPE THAT U.S. AND SOMALIA COULD SOON RESUME PROGRAMS OF COOPERATION TO ASSIST SOMALIA'S DEVELOPMENT.

8. COMMENT: (A) FROM EMBASSY'S STANDPOINT, VISIT WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL, EVEN THOUGH SIAD MEETING WAS SO ONE-SIDED. CONGRESSMAN AND MRS. BINGHAM WERE MOST EFFECTIVE IN DEMONSTRATING SINCERE, INFORMED U.S. CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN AFRICA AND SOMALIA. AT ONE POINT, SIAD ASKED CONGRESSMAN BINGHAM TO PASS ON INVITATION TO ANY OTHER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO VISIT SOMALIA.

(B) WHILE SOMALIS MADE IT CLEAR THEY STILL SUSPICIOUS OF U.S. ATTITUDES TOWARD REGIME, CONTINUE TO RANKLE OVER CUT-OFF IN AID, AND U.S. TIES WITH ETHIOPIA, IT ALSO EVIDENT THAT SIAD HAD ORDERED ALL-OUT RECEPTION FOR CODEL. EXTENSIVE FACTUAL COVERAGE OF VISIT IN LOCAL MEDIA INDICATED HIS WILLINGNESS SHOW PUBLIC THAW IN GSDR-U.S. RELATIONS. VISIT ALSO GAVE US UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH SOMALIS IN RELAXED ATMOSPHERE. WE VERY MUCH HOPE THERE WILL BE OTHER SUCH VISITS.
CROMWELL

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